Reflections on ten years of NCLB, Laurence Glenzer 1-15-2012

I have to agree with a lot of what was written in all four reflections on NCLB. Linda Darling-Hammond focuses on moving forward learning from the mistakes made and missed opportunities over the past ten years. I definitely agree about stopping the federal micromanagement of schools, and rekindling programs that were phased out that might have been effective for schools trying to meet there individual needs. I definitely agree with Linda concerning thoughtful performance based assessment, using assessment as a tool to assess, not a means of punishment.

Jack Jennings approach to the last ten years is definitely an optimistic and positive one, focusing on what NCLB has done for education, not the failures as most critics spout. Despite obviously being a seeming proponent of NCLB according to how the article is written, I believe in some f the points Jack lays out, such as extensive available data on student progress, a focus on improving lower performing schools, development of the common core standards initiative, etc. It is the way some of these results have been implemented by the federal government, how the data was used, and the strategies used to improve lower performing schools such as turn arounds that NCLB created that I believe ultimately weakened our education system in America.

Susan Ohanion’s brief reflection is a chronological list of minute accounts each year that NCLB was in effect, showing a slow downward spiral of negative results of the legislation. This article takes an aggressive tone in explaining how devastating and damaging NCLB has been to our educational landscape in the past ten years, which I cannot disagree on any account.

Ms. Thelma Melendez de Santa Ana’s reflection depicts her as an obvious proponent of the legislation as well as a part of the beaurocracy. As with all proponents’ reviews of the legislation I have read, they stick to the stump speech of pure intentions to improve education of America’s youth, and truly that is a worthy goal. It was never the goals or intentions of the bill that I had ever questioned, but rather the implementation and strategies used within the bill to achieve that very broad and basic goal. NCLB is a work in progress according to Thelma, and I agree, but after ten years, things need to change significantly, and reauthorization of the bill without drastic rewriting, creating really a new piece of legislation to help improve education has to be done. The bill should not continue to lay down standardized benchmarks to be measured, punished, and rewarded, based on the assumption that every school in America in the same. I believe the beaurocracy must get rid of the idea that huge initiatives that try to fabricate or replicate success are effective. Policy makers need to realize that each school and community has its individual successes and failures, and need to be evaluated individually. Social inequality and poverty need to be brought more directly into the conversation when discussing education and achievement. We need to begin to combat poverty and socio-economic inequality that contributes so extremely to the problems in education today.